

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A milk-added coffee beverage characterized by being prepared by adding a strongly basic substance and/or a basic amino acid to coffee component, mixing milk component therewith and then heat sterilizing the mixture.
2. (Original) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, characterized in that the strongly basic substance and/or basic amino acid is added before mixture with milk component.
3. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, wherein addition of the strongly basic substance and/or basic amino acid prevents precipitation after the heat sterilization.
4. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, wherein addition of the strongly basic substance and/or basic amino acid reduces the amount of emulsifier and/or thickening agent required.
5. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, wherein the pH of the milk-added coffee beverage product is 5.8-7.0.
6. (Original) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 5, wherein the total amount of emulsifier and thickening agent added is no greater than 1 wt%.
7. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, wherein the strongly basic substance is at least one selected from the group consisting of

sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, trisodium phosphate and tripotassium phosphate.

8. (Original) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 7, wherein the amount of the strongly basic substance added is 0.005-0.5 wt%.

9. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, wherein the basic amino acid is at least one selected from the group consisting of lysine, arginine and histidine.

10. (Original) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 9, wherein the amount of the basic amino acid added is 0.01-1 wt%.

11. (Currently Amended) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, wherein ~~the amount of sodium bicarbonate is added is no greater than~~ in an amount of up to 0.14 wt% in addition to the strongly basic substance and/or the basic amino acid.

12. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, which contains coffee component at 0.1-10 wt% in terms of solid portion.

13. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, which contains milk component at 0.1-10 wt% in terms of solid portion.

14. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, characterized in that the milk component is cow milk.

15. (Previously Presented) A milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1, characterized by containing substantially no sweet components or being only lightly sweetened.

16. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a milk-added coffee beverage according to claim 1.

17. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a milk-added coffee beverage produced through a step of heat sterilization of coffee component and milk component as the main raw materials, wherein a strongly basic substance and/or basic amino acid used as a pH adjuster is added prior to the heating step while sodium bicarbonate is either not used at all or used at in an amount no greater than 0.14 wt%, to reduce the amount of emulsifier and/or thickening agent required and prevent precipitation by the heat sterilization, for production of a rich-flavored milk-added coffee beverage.